

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 292449

22

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DRAFTED BY EA/PRCM:RRHART:GEC

APPROVED BY EA:AWHUMMEL, JR

EA/PRCM:HETTHAYER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USLO PEKING

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 292449

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EMIN, CH, US

SUBJECT: SALVAGE OF SUNKEN JAPANESE VESSEL IN PRC WATERS

REF: PEKING 2451

1. DEPARTMENT DOES NOT BELIEVE USG SHOULD BECOME INVOLVED IN THIS PROPOSED SALVAGE VENTURE (REFTEL) IN ANY WAY. THUS, USLO SHOULD RETURN THOSE COPIES OF MATERIALS DESTINED FOR PRC OFFICIALS AND CORPORATIONS TO THE SENDER WITH A NOTATION THAT THE COMPANY SHOULD SEND THEM DIRECTLY TO THE DESIRED RECIPIENTS.

2. FYI: PROPOSAL BY SALVAGE AND DIVING INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION TO SALVAGE JAPANESE VESSEL, AWA MARU, WHICH WAS SUNK IN 1945 OFF CHINA COAST, HAS LONG AND COMPLICATED HISTORY. A SECOND SALVAGE COMPANY, BASED IN HONOLULU BUT APPARENTLY LARGELY JAPANESE CONTROLLED, IS ALSO INTERESTED IN THIS PROJECT.

3. THE DEPARTMENT'S PRIME CONTACT WITH PARTIES INVOLVED
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PAGE 02 STATE 292449

HAS BEEN JOHN BENNETT OF SALVAGE AND DIVING INTERNATIONAL

CORPORATION, WHO WAS EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF US SUBMARINE WHICH TORPEDOED THE JAPANESE SHIP. IN SUCH CONTACTS, WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY EMPHASIZED THE NECESSITY OF OBTAINING PRIOR PRC APPROVAL FOR ANY SALVAGE ATTEMPT AND WARNED STRONGLY AGAINST ANY ATTEMPT TO SALVAGE THE VESSEL CLANDESTINELY. END FYI.

ROBINSON

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NNN

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